

Claims 1-28 are currently rejected.

Please cancel Claim 21.

Please amend Claim 1 as follows:

1. (amended) A method of forming an isolation region in a semiconductor substrate comprising the steps of:

A1 a) annealing a liner oxide in a trench in the surface of said semiconductor substrate, and

B b) subsequently backfilling said trench with a bulk oxide

Please amend Claim 11 as follows:

11. (amended) A process for reducing leakage in forming an integrated circuit structure comprising the steps of:

A2 a) annealing a liner oxide layer in a shallow trench within a semiconductor substrate under conditions sufficient to reduce the rate of dislocations within said integrated circuit; and

B b) subsequently chemical vapor depositing an oxide in said shallow trench.

Please amend Claim 23 as follows:

A3 23. (amended) A process for forming the isolation regions in a semiconductor substrate comprising the steps of:

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a) etching a trench in the surface of said semiconductor substrate, said trench having corners therein;

b) growing a liner oxide in said trench; and

c) annealing said liner oxide to reduce stresses at said corners; and

d) subsequently backfilling said trench with a bulk oxide.

Please amend Claim 26 as follows:

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26. (amended) A process for growing and annealing liner oxide (LINOX) in a trench formed on the surface of a semiconductor comprising;

a) growing said liner oxide in said trench at a first temperature; and

b) annealing said liner oxide prior to further oxide deposition at a second temperature higher than the first temperature elevated above that used in said step a) sufficient to reduce stresses in said liner oxide.